

Cinema Studies

Cinema Studies is one of Oberlin's newest majors. While cinema courses have been taught at Oberlin for a number of years, it wasn't until 2002 that the faculty voted to create a program and major in cinema. Though it is a new major, Cinema Studies offers a wide variety of courses in various cinema traditions and topics. In addition to the courses offered by the core Cinema Studies faculty, the African-American Studies, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and other departments offer cinema courses in their own particular traditions. Students at Oberlin can expect to find at least twenty cinema courses offered each year.

Cinema Studies is designed to accommodate both students interested in film production as well as those interested in studying cinema from a critical perspective. The Cinema Studies faculty believe that this kind of unified program fits the spirit of liberal arts education more fully than a divided program that separates critical and production work.

In addition to the courses offered at Oberlin, students can apply to study for a spring semester at NYU's Tisch School. Credits from the Tisch program transfer directly to Oberlin, and Oberlin financial aid is automatically applied to students entering the Tisch Program. In addition to the regular course offerings and the Tisch Spring Semester Program, Oberlin has three student groups focused on cinema. The Film Co-op teaches courses in film production in the Experimental College and supports student filmmaking initiatives. The Oberlin Film Society (OFS) and the Independent Film Society (IFC) each offer a program of film showings each year.

Cinema Studies graduates go on to work in academic programs and in filmmaking and related industries. As a liberal arts oriented program, Cinema Studies also prepares students for work in such fields as arts management or journalism.

Major Requirements

The Cinema Studies major requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, structured so that students gain important critical

tools in core courses and also have the opportunity to pursue their own interests through electives.

Students initially must take two required core courses, taught by core Cinema faculty members (Day, Hamilton, Pence, and Pingree). The first, an Introduction to Cinema Studies course entitled "Cinema Studies 101: Form, Style & Meaning," will introduce them to the basic critical tools necessary to engage with what we have referred to as the **textual** dimensions of film. The second, which can be any of the 200 level Cinematic Traditions courses ("History of German Cinema," "Hollywood and Its Alternatives," "American Cinema," "Scene of the Crime" "Cinema and Spectacle" "Documentary Cinema"), will introduce students to the issues related to the social and cultural dimensions of the cinema.

Students will then take advanced (300 and 400) level courses. Majors would take at least two 300-level courses and one 400-level course with core faculty, the latter as a senior capstone. Other courses would count as electives chosen in consultation with the major advisor. This approach would allow majors to take courses offered by faculty in other departments and programs as the number of cinema courses on campus grows, but return them to the central issues of inquiry at each level in courses offered by core faculty in the program.

The major in Cinema Studies at Oberlin has developed a framework that emphasizes broad **areas of inquiry**. We have defined the four areas of inquiry as a series of related questions:

1. *What is a cinematic text and how do we understand it? How does it differ from other artistic texts, and what does it have in common with them? What is the relation of the material nature of the cinematic text to our understanding of it as a work of art?*
2. *How do the circumstances of production affect the cinematic text and our understanding of it? Issues*

raised under this rubric can include auteur theory, genre theory, and the industrial and economic history of cinema.

3. *How do the circumstances of circulation affect the cinematic text and our understanding of it? Issues raised under this rubric could include reception theory, psychoanalytic theory, and the evolution of films and genres through history.*
4. *What is the relation of the cinematic text to its larger social and cultural situation? This rubric will allow students to explore political and ideological approaches to cinema.*

Geoff Pingree (2001)

B.A. Brigham Young University, 1984

M.A. University of Chicago, 1986

Ph.D. University of Chicago 1996

Documentary Cinema, Cinema Production,
Spanish Cinema

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Cinema Studies Core Faculty

William Patrick Day (1983)

Professor of English, Program Director

B.A. Oberlin College, 1971

M.A. University of Chicago 1972

Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1976

American Cinema, Cinematic Genres

Elizabeth Hamilton (2000)

Assistant Professor of German

B.A. Grove City College, 1987

M.A. University of Delaware, 1991

Ph. D. Ohio State University, 1998

German Cinema

Jeffery Pence (1997)

Assistant Professor of English

B.A. Oberlin College, 1988

M.A. Temple University, 1993

Ph.D., Temple University, 1998

American Cinema, Cinema & Spirituality

Cinema & Technology